

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Volume VIII

MAY 1954

No. 95

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OUR LADY IN US

THE EDITOR

THE whole of the Catholic world has this year been directed by the Holy Father to centre its devotion on the Mother of God. The occasion is the centenary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception, and the effect is one more year in which the constantly developing doctrine of the place of Mary in the work of the redemption, and therefore in the daily life of man, is given impetus and hurried on apace. It might seem that we had progressed too far, that there was little more to be said or thought on this matter. But in fact the development, like true growth of any kind, is drawing its vigour from the centre and there is in these days an increasing sense of origins and sources which shows that the mind of the Church is not, like the mind of many men, moving on from one thing to another without retaining any unity or synthesis. The mind of the Church is the mind of the Word of God and therein all is one from the central reality to the outermost detail of idea or phrase.

When the unique mind of God formed man he had before him the whole work of redemption, and therefore he had his Mother in mind. God from the first moment of time saw his Mother as part of the pattern of the world he formed. Sometimes we meet critics who complain that the words from the eighth book of Proverbs, which are intended to express the eternity of the divine wisdom, are misapplied by the Church in the liturgy to our Lady: 'I was set up from eternity and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet and I was already conceived. . . . I was with him forming all things, and was delighted every day, playing before him at all times. . . .' Many such phrases from Proverbs or Ecclesiasticus, the literal meaning of which is concerned with the wisdom of the Creator, have been applied in the liturgy to our Lady; and the application becomes clear when we realize that, before the world was made, God in his eternity looked with love upon his Mother as upon his Son.

If we turn to the early expression of man's attitude to God we are therefore not surprised to find things that represent not only the Word and Wisdom or the Son of God but also his Mother. Such representations and symbols are of course often disassociated from one another, distorted, materialized and misunderstood. But they do at least show that the divine pattern has its echo in the nature of man and that there lies within the human heart desires for the true Word of God and the Mother of the Word. In this instance these desires express themselves at every turn in terms of the 'divine mother', interwoven in the rites and ceremonies of primitive religious.

To view the gropings of man towards the motherhood of God from the point of view of the certain reality of Mary the mother of Jesus not only brings out many vestiges of truth in those religions but also helps us to understand the relation of mankind to the Mother of God. Thus the Great Mother reveals certain natural dispositions in man's nature which can only be actuated in truth by God or his mother. She was always connected with the fundamental movements of nature and with the beginnings of life. Men who are concerned with the primitive rhythm of life naturally look to the earth, or the spirit of the earth as maternal. We still inherit this attitude when we speak of mother nature or mother earth. The earth—or the whole of nature—brings forth as though from some hidden womb new life of all sorts, in particular the crops upon which man depends for his livelihood. Men were drawn instinctively to regard the earth as the universal mother from whom derived the fertility of the soil, of the crops and indeed of man himself. In itself, of course, the worship paid to this mysterious power was shot through with fear issuing in a type of slavery to the movements of the seasons and the consequent growth of the crops. They were enslaved to the Great Mother.

It is interesting to contrast this type of agricultural religion with that of the nomadic tribe of Israel. The latter, out on the hills and wandering in the desert, was far more conscious of sudden unexpected changes coming from the heavens. Thunder and lightning, the tempest and the gentle

dew and the tranquil stars over their tents at night—these drew their minds away from the slavery of mother earth so often barren and unproductive on those rocky heights back to the transcendent Father of the heavens. Even naturally these men were freer in their life and freer in their religion. Yet without the guidance of the revealed voice of the true God the Israelites with their nomadic neighbours would have found a goddess of fertility in their temples and high places. This was indeed one of their temptations—the green groves of the pagan goddess who so often called to them with the enticing voice of settled security of roof and field and undying river. It was God the Father of the tribe who led them out into the desert away from the enslavement to the mother. Yet the Jews, too, were waiting for the true fulfilment of their natural inclinations, a fulfilment as yet unguessed and realized only in the temptation to idolatry. The true religion had to be purged from the fear and the slavery that was an inheritance of the fall, before it was possible for the people of God to receive their Mother in freedom at the foot of the Cross, a Mother who was to be of their kind—not a god, yet the Mother of God.

A study of primitive religions, then, often offers strange parallels with Christian practice in devotion to our Lady. The goddess was the queen of the spirit world and invoked as a protection against evil spirits; she was connected with streams and rivers bringing fertility to land and pasture, with mountains and caves as representing the earth and the entrance into its interior. The reader need not be reminded that these ancient rites and beliefs were idolatrous. But that does not mean to say that the fact that our Lady has appeared close to streams or causing waters to flow from rocks, or on mountains and in caves, discloses a mere accidental similarity with those other religious associations. On the contrary, it would suggest that there is in man a psychological link with the real Mother of God which can be traced back to the unique will of God creating the whole universe and its entire history according to a single pattern. So our Lady fulfils all those myths and rites, but at the same time purifies them with the purity of truth. She does

not kill or trample on the instincts which led men to seek the Great Mother, but develops and perfects them in the liberty of the Spirit of God. Her poverty, chastity and obedience fully accord with human psychology; they do not lead to repression, the fearful fascination of the irrational powers of nature, a repression which breaks down in sudden outbursts of brutality. Evil inclinations, which are in fact the warping of good natural instincts, must of course be suppressed; and the immaculate Mother in her purity and obedience leads men to a true integrity by the suppression of evil. She shows how the natural rhythm of life should not be denied but elevated. She purifies man of his misconceptions regarding the principle of fertility in heavenly regions and she also purifies him in his daily Christian life.

It is not without significance then that the constantly increasing devotion to our Lady has been fostered particularly by her apparitions. These visions have always occurred to simple, unsophisticated people, innocent young peasants, and they have occurred in close connection with the elemental things which gave substance to the pagan's ways of worship. She appears, as we have noted, in grottoes or caves on the mountain-side, beside freshly flowing streams or by trees or bushes. There have been signs in the heavens and the sun itself has seemed to be affected. In the supernatural religion of her Son the Mother fulfils the natural instincts of man, retaining their simple elemental character yet purifying them, revealing the wholeness of her Son's religion, that Son who inherits the whole earth and all who dwell thereon. While men strive to save their complex civilization on the conscious level, depending on the accurate functioning of their mathematical calculations, the Mother appears to redeem their maltreated and abused instinctual life. Psychologists have become increasingly aware of the necessity of such a redemption, but the Handmaid of the Lord is effecting it.

THE LADY OF FAIR LOVE

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

IN his latest encyclical, 'Fulgens corona gloria', the Pope has proclaimed our Lady's Year. The occasion of this proclamation is the centenary celebration in December of the infallible definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God. This is but an instance of the progressive development of Marian tradition which from the earliest times is seen to be implicit and almost instinctive in the Faith of the Church. Pope Pius XII has allied himself closely with that tradition by becoming its spokesman. This he has done in defining the dogma of the bodily Assumption of our Blessed Lady into heaven, and in dedicating the present commemorative year to her honour.

Between Mary and the mysteries of faith there is an essential connection. This is seen so clearly in the Holy Rosary, wherein the joys, sorrows and glories of a holy partnership between the Son and his Mother are woven into a garland of prayer. The relationship between Jesus and Mary is living and everlasting. And so must be the relationship of Jesus and Mary to all those who by grace have received the adoption of sons, which is a sharing in the relationship which Jesus enjoyed by nature with his eternal Father and his human Mother. As St Augustine said, the Maker of the world came into the world, becoming present in our flesh, 'This is he who is beautiful above the sons of men, Son of holy Mary, Bridegroom of Holy Church whom he has made like his own mother; for he has given her to us to be our mother and keeps her a virgin for himself.'

A fervent lover of our Lady once wrote, 'There is a highest, ultra-literal, sense which it is the duty of the theologian to discover and defend. And whereas the literary critic will admit that the text of an inspired saying must at least mean the least, the theologian will add that it may mean the most. For example; when the angel addresses our Lady: "Hail, full of grace", it must mean at least "Hail, highly favoured". Yet it may mean "Hail, full of grace

that hath sanctified thee from the moment of thy beginning". Again, when Elizabeth cried out: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?", it must mean at least "the mother of the expected Messiah". Yet, as that Messiah is "God of God", it may mean "the Mother of God".¹ It is the unerring and living voice of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, speaking in the name of God, that gives absolute assurance to, and makes at one, millions of minds.

There is no room for doubt that there is but one person in Jesus Christ and this is divine. The Blessed Virgin Mary is therefore to be acknowledged and venerated by all as really and truly the Mother of God.

This is the mystery towards which the miraculous star drew the Gentile world, enabling all without distinction to find the Holy Child and his Mother. But owing to the rise of heresy, faith in the Incarnate Word had to be proclaimed anew by God-given authority in the Council of Ephesus (431). This has rightly been called Our Lady's Council, since therein was solemnly declared that without any doubt Mary ought to be called, by all, not the mother of Christ the man only, but *Theotokos*, or God-bearer 'whom the Eternal Godhead has gifted with the fullness of grace and endowed with such great dignity'.²

None is more eloquent in his esteem for God's Mother than St Thomas Aquinas. And the Popes have repeatedly made his words their own in extolling her merits and virtues. Pope Pius XII has done so in his recent great encyclical where he cites a passage which might otherwise remain hidden to many, 'From the very fact that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, she has a kind of boundless dignity derived from God's infinite goodness'.³ Whatever form of address we may use to her the title of Mother is the greatest of them all. It is the one most frequently used in holy writ, for she is the mother of fair love and holy hope. At the first miracle of her Son, we are

The N.T. Witness To Our Blessed Lady, Fr Vincent McNabb, O.P., p. 12.

Pope Pius XI, *Lux Veritatis*, 25 December, 1931.

Summa I, 25, 6 ad 1.

told by St John that 'the mother of Jesus was there', and it was at her motherly suggestion that our Lord entered on his public career, and at its closing moments she stood firmly at the cross-side with the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Her divine motherhood did not allow her to encroach beyond the borders of divinity, but it is the explanation of all the favours which are uniquely hers. 'At the first instant of her existence she was found on the side of God as Satan's foe. . . . Divine grace was hers without stint and came to her with life itself. Thus was she fittingly prepared for the virginal childbearing through which was crushed the serpent's head. The Virgin Mother of God is the Immaculate Mother of the Saviour of the world.'⁴

This is the truth in which our faith is once again aroused and reaffirmed during this Marian Year. This was a truth to which the Catholic mind had not been altogether blind, yet there was still a danger of its being denied or of being hedged round with obscurities. And the infallible decision made under the guidance of the Holy Ghost by Pope Pius IX, on 8 December, 1854, has given a precision and certitude to our thought far beyond the reach of theological speculation made by unaided reason on the data of revelation. As Bishop Ullathorne a little later was to write, 'It is curious that so long as the Immaculate Conception was believed, received, and preached with a simple unreasoning faith, as it always was in the East, there was no difficulty about it. The moment reason touched it it became obscured and darkened, and the language of divines got perplexed. And it has taken six centuries to get from reasoning to faith, and for the wisdom of man to get back to the foolishness of faith.'⁵

The proclamation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin as a dogma of the Church was made by Pius IX in the Vatican Basilica in the presence of more than two hundred cardinals and bishops from all over the world. The definition was made in the following terms: 'by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles Peter and

⁴ *Mary Mother of God*, Vassall-Phillips, 4.77.x. (*The Teaching of the Catholic Church*, Vol. I, p. 526).

⁵ *Letters*, p. 60.

Paul, and by Our own, We pronounce and define that the doctrine which states that the most Blessed Virgin Mary was, in the first instant of her conception, by the singular grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God and is therefore to be firmly and unswervingly believed by all the faithful'.

Our Blessed Lady is the Mother of God, because her Son is both God and man. Her motherhood is in as close a relationship with God as a mother is with her son. Yet her Son is her Redeemer as well as ours, since her sinlessness is achieved by 'preventing' grace flowing from his cross. And so God showered upon Mary all the gifts and graces which befitted her to be the Mother and Spouse of God. Accordingly she is, as the Bride of Christ, Queen and Lady of heaven and earth, and whatever privilege has been granted to any of the Saints, has been bestowed on her in more eminent degree.

'Thou art all beautiful, Mary, and in thee is no stain', is the Church's prayer in the Office for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Although a creature like ourselves, and utterly dependent upon her Creator, no shadow of sin was ever allowed to touch her most pure soul. And it was nearly four years after the authoritative definition of this revealed truth that our Lady herself appeared at Lourdes to a peasant girl and spoke to her in the Basque language, saying: 'I am the Immaculate Conception'.

The crowning glory of Mary's peerless sanctity is her glorious assumption into heaven which was proclaimed by the present Pope as a dogma of faith in the Jubilee year of 1950. Thus we are reassured that our Lady's all-pervading influence is not restricted to any time or place, for she remains for ever united to her Son, in the borderland of eternity.

The brilliance of our Lady's immaculate sanctity is best seen against the background of dark shadows. This tormented world is filled with ungodliness and sin. Her free submission to God's design brought her into a close partnership with her Son's redemptive work at every stage.

DEVOTION TO MARY IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

IT is a common theme in Marian theology that our Lady's motherhood of men means that in some way we are born of her when we are born into the life of grace. What that means exactly no one knows; there is divergence of opinions about the closeness of Mary's work in our souls to the work of the Holy Ghost. Evidently our Lady does not save us; to what extent God has chosen to associate her with himself in this divine work is not yet known, and perhaps never will be till we see it all in retrospect, in heaven.

Our Lady is our spiritual mother. Here we are on safe ground. If we ponder on that fact, work out its implications, act on it, we shall be sure of 'thinking with the Church'—*sentire cum Ecclesia*. Our earthly mothers give us life, earthly life, though they do not create our souls. Mary gives us spiritual life—she is called Mediatrix of all graces—but she does not give us grace as from herself, for it is God's own gift.

We may thank her, then, for all that we have in the spiritual life without troubling our heads about the exact way in which it is given. But it is best in the spiritual life to look at things from above rather than from below, from God's point of view rather than our own. In this particular matter it is also necessary to look at things from our Lady's point of view—from above in that sense. Her interest in us is that of a mother in her children. 'Interest', of course, is a feeble word. It is a relationship that she has with us. 'Mother-love' is the right word.

Being our mother she cannot possibly put a limit to her desire to help us. In the great matter, the life-and-death matter, of salvation, she has given us Jesus. We must not think of this as something that happened in the distant past. She, we may be sure, does not think of it in that way; for her it is as if she had become the mother of Jesus—and thus our mother—only today, as if God had said only today, 'Behold thy son!'. We may find it difficult to eliminate time and

stance like that, but for God, and for Mary, it is easy. He takes each one of us as her child exactly as she took John for her child at the foot of the cross.

Thus the basis of our devotion to Mary should be a realization that she is our mother. Nothing less will do, because nothing less will enable us to see things from her point of view. Suppose we were unaware of the identity of our human parents, and then suddenly discovered who they were. We should not have any doubts or hesitations about our attitude to them. Motherhood is one of those things which do not need to be studied but only remembered, pondered upon. Every man is capable of writing a book about his mother—and if his words were stumbling, incoherent, unbalanced, that would not be because he did not have the whole matter, from first to last chapter, very clear in his heart.

But let us suppose that we do not 'feel a great devotion' to our blessed Lady. Our basic principle holds good. We sometimes do not 'feel a great devotion' to our earthly mothers. If our actions, and the few words we do say, express real, deep love, a mother does not mind so much about the lack of demonstration, of caresses, of special attention. She may even prefer that we should not try to be fussy, if we do not feel like it. Can it be that just as there are different mothers, and different sons, in this respect, some reserved, others demonstrative, so there are many different types of children of Mary, and she is to each one a perfect mother, according to his disposition and natural bent? It may be, at least in theory. In fact it must be true to the extent that as grace perfects nature, so our Lady perfects nature.

Nevertheless it is not very likely that Mary, being a perfect mother, can ever agree to being *forgotten*. That, I think, is the one unpardonable fault in our devotion to Mary. Our Lord complains of forgetfulness. His sacred Heart is pierced by neglect, and so is our Lady's.

I said that all we need to do is to ponder on the fact that she is our mother. The result will be, of course, that we discover a lot of things which had never occurred to us before. If we are inclined to intellectual speculation we shall see, before we know where we are, budding theologians—

mariologists (unpleasant-looking word, but harmless if kept in place). We shall then be in danger of having so great, so overpowering an idea of Mary that our love may seem in danger of shrinking from sheer timidity—as if we had discovered that our mother was more admirable than lovable. However, I believe that this danger can safely be ignored. In fact it does not work out like that. We *always* love her more by knowing her better.

A word about this matter of pondering ('intellectually' or just lovingly). It will not do to go about it negatively, as those do who are afraid of making some mistake in their praise of Mary. We do not need to be afraid of mistakenly praising her. Our spiritual common sense should be proof against that. The only serious mistake we could make would be to attribute something to her that belongs of right to God alone. For our own sakes, in our own personal devotion, we may—and I think we should—ignore those fearful people who issue solemn warnings about not scandalizing protestants. Such things are a matter of prudence in speaking *with* non-Catholics. They do not apply to our own thoughts about our own mother. We live in a bleak spiritual climate. We must not grow rugged and cold but rather nourish the warmth that is in us. The spiritual climate, in this metaphor, is made, in the long run, by people. We must try to change it, gradually, and first of all by leading a sunny, healthy, Catholic spiritual life ourselves.¹

But there are many wonderful things that could be said about the influence of devotion to Mary on our spiritual life. They have been said, and are still being said, by saints and theologians, year by year. They all seem to amount to this, that devotion to Mary is a progressive consciousness and realisation of the fact that Mary is the mother of Jesus and our mother also. Whether we stress, with St Alphonsus (and so many others), Mary's role as protectress and helper,

¹ It seems a great pity to me that sometimes writers on spiritual subjects suffer from a sort of protestant cramp in this matter. The latest example I have noticed is *The Blessed Virgin*, by Jean Guilton, which was published a while ago. M. Guilton seems to be making an attempt to please Protestants by paring away large sections of commonly accepted teaching about our Lady—with the excuse, I suppose, that they are not *de fide*. It is an attitude entirely out of keeping with sound Marian theology.

bringing us powerfully, as it were, from outside, to Jesus, or whether we consider the matter from the inside, stressing the intimate connection between Mary's work and the work of the Holy Ghost (as did St Louis-Marie de Montfort and again many others), we are simply living, ever more consciously, the knowledge that Mary is God's mother and our mother.

Thus we may gather the flowers of Marian writings, devotional and intellectual (the two should be one, but, alas, they are not) on all sides. If we come across learned explanations of the *way* in which Mary mothers us, and can give them a *real* assent, all the better. If we find them slightly unreal we had perhaps best leave them alone. Our Lady's way, with each one, is personal, as a mother's must be.

The natural effect of a growing realization of Mary's motherhood is that we become like her. There is no need to analyse this. It is clear that a man who loves his mother and is devoted to her will instinctively defer to her, and those traits of character which he had inherited from her will be accentuated as the years go by. He will also come to think very much as she does. I think that for our present purpose we may notice this especially in people's attitude to suffering and sorrow. Those who love our Lady and think about her a great deal become, automatically, so to speak, more compassionate and more willing to dwell upon the thought of suffering with and for Jesus. This will not seem strange when we remember that it was at the foot of the cross that Mary received us as her children.

This, then, is the role of devotion to Mary in the spiritual life, that it makes us realise that she is our spiritual mother who brought us into the spiritual life and rears us for our eternal home; and that means, in fact, becoming like her, as children are like their mothers. Anything that seems over and above this is really only a part of it, an expression of it—and it may vary much with different souls.

VIRGO PRUDENTISSIMA

RALPH VELARDE

THE idea is current that virtue and intelligence have little to do with each other; the idea implied in the line of the song, 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever'. We may readily agree that virtue has little to do with mere smartness, or with that slick mental dexterity so much admired in the lower reaches of the commercial world; but it is certain doctrine that mature, adult virtue cannot dispense with intelligence since the will is the executive or directive faculty of the intellect.

The planning directive virtue of the moral life is prudence, and it is an intellectual virtue in the sense that its seat is in the intellect, and its function is to teach us how to act, applying general principles to conduct here and now in given concrete circumstances. It enables us above all else to keep the end or reason of action in view.

We have only to recall that our Lady's intellect is unspoiled by original sin to realise that her conduct was always and in the highest possible sense wholly according to reason; that no part of her conduct arose from whim, fancy, or imperfectly controlled emotion. The best of us find that we do act from impulse, or that whim and emotion often master our conduct.

There are three main acts which go to make up the virtue of prudence: normally the initial process consists in deliberation—the considering, the thinking out of the problem. This it is well to remark may lead us to ask advice of those who are expert in certain matters or who have had the sort of experience we may lack. Discussion with others is seldom valueless: the mere attempt to state a problem commonly clarifies it.

The thoughtful cogitative side of our Lady's character is one of the things which emerge clearly from the Gospel narrative: it caused St Luke to remark how 'she kept all these things in her heart'. At the very beginning of the Gospel story we hear her asking, 'How shall this be done

since I know not man?': How shall the birth of the child Jesus be brought about since she is, and intends to remain, a virgin?

It is perhaps not fanciful to think that the weeks Mary spent with St Elizabeth before the birth of St John the Baptist, were weeks during which she learned all that was needful for an expectant mother to know, that she profited by the knowledge of the older woman, and on the highest level that she discussed with her the religious and spiritual significance of all the wonderful events of that time, with all the insight and discretion inspired by a supernatural prudence.

Prudence is concerned with the formation of a right conscience and in that the mind must play a dominant part. How I think and judge determines my conscience. Consequently the second act of prudence is judgment. The spirit of christian prudence is not one of merely cold calculation. Moral judgments are not like judgments in mathematics; we cannot weigh sin, nor can we measure virtue by any material yardstick. It is the vice of excessive casuistry to think that we can. Nor is christian prudence merely content to ask, 'Is this a sin?' (with the rider that if it is not I will do it). The frame of mind which is interested in how far we can go in any line of conduct without sin has little to do with prudence. At a minimum level the mind may ask, 'What action does God's known will demand?': this we might call a *minimum prudence*, without which a man will sin, and perhaps gravely. At a higher level the question may be, 'What action is best if I am to save my soul?': this we might call a *normal christian prudence*; and finally, at the highest level, 'What action will best promote the glory of God?': and this we might call *maximum or perfect christian prudence*.

Deliberation and judgment are often fused together in the act of prudence, as is seen in the events which we group under the Annunciation; judgment seems to follow instantaneously on deliberation. This is wholly in line with the nature of high sanctity: that an intuitive sense is given to those who are wholly under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, enabling them to discern with a perfect accuracy the right and prudent course of action in the most

complex circumstances of life. Prudence, for all that we have emphasised its intellectual character, remains a moral virtue. Intellect and will, heart and mind are forever acting on one another in our moral lives. As we are, so we shall judge. There is no moral virtue without prudence, but no genuine virtue of prudence can develop independently of a good life.

It follows on deliberation that we judge; on judgment that we make a decision. I deliberate, I judge, I decide; the intellect commands the will and the will obeys. Without decision there would be no action and all our intellectual activities would be valueless.

‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord’—a decision of the most exalted prudence inspired by the most exalted supernatural wisdom, by a will perfectly in tune with the divine will. None the less the decision involved deliberation and judgment, and out of all this was born the crucial decision which did not so much change history as reveal to us its inner meaning. Without thinking that our Lady’s decision to do God’s will was ever for a single moment in doubt; without minimizing either its sovereign freedom, her *Fiat* is the expression of the most momentous decision ever taken by a human will and it remains all along a most perfect manifestation of the virtue of prudence.



THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION

ST FRANCIS DE SALES

Translated by VINCENT KERNS, M.S.F.S.

[The style of this sermon preached by St Francis de Sales indicates that it belongs to the first year of his mission to the Chablais. It is not unlikely that it was delivered on the feast of the Annunciation, 25 March, 1595. The text here followed is that of the Annecy Edition, *Oeuvres de Saint François de Sales*, VII, pp. 240-243.]

‘Hail, thou who art full of grace.’—LUKE I, 28.

THE early Church, all over the world, in perfect agreement, always greeted God's Mother in this angelic manner: 'Hail Mary, full of grace'. And our nearest ancestors, following in pious harmony the hallowed fashion of their forefathers, sang the 'Hail Mary' everywhere and at all times.

They thought by reverently honouring his Mother to make themselves very pleasing to the heavenly King. They knew no more fitting way of paying her this honour than imitating the respect and distinctions decreed and bestowed upon her according to his good pleasure by God himself. This was to do her honour on the day that his divine Majesty wished so greatly to honour the rest of mankind in this Virgin as to become man himself.

Holy greeting! Genuine praises! Splendid and unique homage! The great God inspired them; a great angel pronounced them; a great evangelist recorded them; the earliest ages have used them; our forefathers have taught them to us.

But here is an extraordinary thing. Whenever David plucked the strings of his harp—you may remember—the evil spirit left Saul, as though subdued by the tuneful melody (1 Kings 16, 23). Well, this evil spirit, sworn enemy of all harmony and agreement, taking possession of certain fickle-brained people, inharmonious and out of tune, speaks by their lips, uttering all kinds of abuse and blasphemies against the use of this holy greeting.

Calvin, in his *Gospel Harmony*, calls us superstitious, because we greet someone who is not present and meddle with what does not concern us. He further accuses us of sorcery, saying that we have been badly taught if we use this greeting as a prayer, since it is only a simple felicitation.

All these expostulations may be reduced in the end to three points. Firstly, it is an infringement of the angels' ministry to make our own the angel's greeting, since it is not our business. Secondly, it is superstitious to greet one who is not present. Thirdly, it is a gross blunder to think of using this greeting as a prayer.

What terrible people they are! They would be better advised to say quite simply that it is an evil thing because

the Church commands it; for that is what they mean.

Now, I say with the Church that it is a holy thing to honour and greet this holy Virgin; and to greet her with the angel's greeting. This greeting of the angel makes a very beautiful and devout prayer.

I shall not waste time explaining to you what a greeting is, less still telling you that to greet one another is a Christian duty. All the Scriptures are full of the beautiful examples and greetings of the patriarchs to angels and among themselves; and everywhere, at every meeting, the greeting is mentioned.

But let me tell you straight that not to greet a person one knows is an expression of contempt, indignation and detestation. I leave aside Aman, who took it for scorn that Mardochai did not greet him; for, from the beginning, all he wanted was to be worshipped, since afterwards his only complaint was that Mardochai did not greet him (Esther 3, 5 and 5, 13).

Listen to the beloved St John: 'If you are visited by one who does not bring this teaching with him, you must not receive him in your houses, or bid him welcome.' (2 John 1, 10.) He considers it a denunciation to give no greeting at all, and never say welcome. What, then, can we say of those who do not want Mary to be greeted at all, save that they hate her? Likewise, St Paul writes to his Philippians: 'Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus' (4, 21), as if he wished that it should be a recognized thing for all holy and virtuous people to be greeted.

If, then, Mary never gave us anything but good example, all her words in the Gospel being full of piety, why shall we be forbidden to greet her? If she is holy, and the holiest of our race, why shall we not greet her? Is that the doctrine our Lord taught us, saying so many times: 'Peace be upon you, peace be upon you'? (Luke 24, 36; John 20, 21.) And 'All hail', he said, meeting the two Marys on his resurrection morning (Matthew 28, 9).

But, say the heretics, you greet those who are absent. Yes, we reply, but what is risky in that? Does not St Paul, in all Epistles greet first this one and then another, although they are absent? To the Philippians does he not write:

Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me send you their greeting; greeting, too, from all the saints'? (4, 22). And does not St Peter end his Epistle: 'The Church here in Babylon, united with you by God's election, sends you her greeting'? (1 Peter 5, 13). They would say that they were present by letter and by messenger; but our Lady is present to Christians principally whenever they think of her.

As St Paul writes to the Corinthians, speaking of the incestuous man: 'For myself, though I am not with you in person, I am with you in spirit; and, so present with you, I have already passed sentence on the man who has acted thus' (1 Cor. 5, 3). And did not Giezi say to Eliseus, in the fourth Book of Kings: 'Was not my heart present, when the man turned back from his chariot to meet thee?' (5, 26). And it is delightful to see in the following chapter how Eliseus tells the king of Israel all that the king of Syria deliberates in his privy chamber. What do you say to the Psalmist when he says: 'Too long have honest hearts waited to see thee grant me redress'? (Ps. 141, 8). How can they await the redress, unless they know the deeds that are to be rewarded?

Now, having thus decided that it is a holy thing to greet the Virgin, I ask you, what more holy greeting could be found than this? A holy Author, holy words. If you are desirous of honouring her, say the 'Hail Mary'. If you are doubtful as to the particular way in which she should be honoured, say the 'Hail Mary'.

But who can ever tell of the movements of grace stirred in the pious heart by this greeting? It represents the most holy mystery of the Incarnation, and therefore the Church adds to the words of the angel, which already convey this solemn mystery, those of St Elizabeth—'Blessed art thou among women'—in order to portray it still more expressively.

THE VIRGIN MARY IN ISLAM AND THE APOCRYPHA *

MAJID FAKHRY

THE Virgin enjoys, like her Son, a position of unique pre-eminence in Islamic legend in general and the Koran in particular. Many of the traits with which the story of her life is embellished derive from apocryphal sources, but are nevertheless of the utmost interest in filling in the gaps in the canonical narrative of the Blessed Virgin's life.

In the Koranic version of the angel's salutation, the superiority of Mary (Arabic, 'Mariam'), whom God had 'chosen and purified, over all the women of mankind' (3, 42) is proclaimed. She is even made to share with her Son the singular distinction of being a 'divine sign unto the generations' (21, 91). In popular legend, however, this pre-eminent position of the Virgin is sometimes disputed and so she is made to share this honour with four other women, who include the two favourite wives of Muhammad and his dearest daughter, Fatimah, from whom the 'noble House of the Prophet' descends.

But despite this popular bias which runs counter to the explicit teaching of the Koran, the Virgin (Al-'Adhra')¹ is universally revered by Muslims as the consummate model of purity, in much the same way as her Son is revered as

* We publish this article in *THE LIFE* because, like the article by the same author in the preceding issue (April, 'Christ in the Koran'), it shows not only the influence of Christianity on Islam and consequently the need to understand this in an apostolic approach to Mohammedanism, but also the contrast between the simplicity of Islamic religion and the complexity of the legendary and apocryphal groundwork of that religion. The true Christian mystic has always been fed on the simplicity of the Gospel narrative; the Muslim who approaches so often his Christian counterpart in phrase and expression has a very different background. Yet, it should be noted, the doctrines clothed by these legends often approximate to the Christian doctrine—in particular in what relates to our Lady.—EDITOR.

¹ Commonly used as a proper noun in Arabic.

the perfect model of holiness. In fact, not only the chastity of the Virgin is recognized by Islam, but her Immaculate Conception as well. Both in the Koran and the 'semi-revealed Sayings of Muhammad', Jesus and his mother are stated to be the only two humans to have been guarded against the impure 'touch' of Satan.² Islamic legend has preserved a beautiful account of the miraculous conception of Anna, the mother of the Virgin. One day, it is related, as she sat under a shady tree, she heard the cheerful chirps of a bird feeding its offspring. Being barren and advanced in years, this episode moved her greatly and so she yearned for an offspring of her own, vowing that should God grant her a child she would dedicate it to his service.

A record of this incident is found in the apocryphal *Protevangelion*, ascribed to James, brother of Christ, from which the Islamic legend probably originated.³ This work is of great antiquity and is alluded to by many of the early Fathers, who draw upon it in their controversies concerning Joseph's age, his relation to the Virgin, and so on.

The Koran, however, makes no mention of Joseph, who is replaced by Zacharias as the guardian of the Virgin. It tells us nevertheless that St Anne, upon giving birth to the Virgin, took her to the Temple in fulfilment of her vow (3, 36-37)—some commentators of the Koran say, when she was still in swaddling clothes. The rabbis, however, so prized the privilege of the little Mary's guardianship that a dispute arose as to who should take charge of her. At length it was resolved to settle the matter by casting lots. Twenty-seven of the rabbis cast their pens (or arrows, according to another theory) into the river. Only the pen of Zacharias floated over the water and consequently he was adjudged the winner (3, 44).

It might not be without interest to compare this account with the parallel account in the *Protevangelion*, which is far richer in detail regarding the childhood of the Virgin. At the age of three, the *Protevangelion* says, the little Mary

K. 3, 36. The saying of Muhammad, on the other hand, reads: 'Every child is touched (or stung) by Satan, save Mary and her Son'. Muslim theologians, however, interpret this as referring to impeccability only. Cf. Ch. III, 1f. and IV, 2. Ed. W. Hone, London, 1820.

was taken, at Joachim's instance, to the Temple and was entrusted to the care of the high priest. Even at this age Mary distinguished herself with her piety and devotion and the high priest foretold that through her the redemption of Israel would be wrought (Ch. VIII, 3-4).

When she was twelve years of age—or, according to another apocryphal account, fourteen⁴—the priests consulted among themselves as to what should be done with her, fearing that she might now be the occasion of defiling the Temple. Zacharias, the high priest, invoking God's guidance, was directed by the angel to summon all the widowers among the people.⁵ When they had all foregathered, each with his staff, they stood awaiting a sign from God, and 'Behold, a dove proceeded out of the rod (of Joseph) and flew upon his head' (VIII, 11). Joseph, however, being a widower and father of several children (Ib. 13 and XII, 2), demurred at first, but reminded of God's inexorable judgment upon those who disobey him, he consented at length to take the little Mary to his house. There, bidding her farewell, the narrative continues, he went off to attend to his building. According to another apocryphal account, Joseph became betrothed to the Virgin;⁶ but the usual ceremony over, Mary returned to her parents' house in Galilee, while Joseph departed to his own city, Bethlehem in Judaea. It was during this interval, according to this account, that the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin and announced to her the conception of the Lord (Ch. VII, 1f.).

But before we turn to this most central episode in the life of our Lady, let us glean whatever further information the Koran or the Apocrypha provide concerning the Virgin's period of preparation and devotion in the Temple. The Koran, for instance, relates how God favoured the Virgin miraculously with daily provisions, in recognition of her great piety and devotion (3, 37). The *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, however, states that the angels not only ministered to her material needs, but also conversed with her

⁴ That of the *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*. Cf. Ch. V, 3.

⁵ *The Gospel of the Birth of Mary* confines the summons to the widowers of the House of David. Cf. Ch. V, 16.

⁶ Cf. *Birth of Mary*, Ch. VI, 5f.

daily and that she was favoured with daily visions from God.⁷ Another favour which fell miraculously to her lot during this period was the privilege of weaving the true purple of the Temple (*Prot.* IX, 4). But of this miraculous assignment the Koran has kept no record.

The greatest favour which God had in store for the Virgin was yet to come. The manner of the Virgin's conception is graphically described in the Koran. Having gone out eastward (to draw water, as both the commentators of the Koran and the *Protevangelion* tell us), the Angel Gabriel appeared to her in the form of a 'well-shaped man'. The Virgin was greatly disturbed at this unexpected apparition, but the Angel bade her set her mind at ease, disclosing to her the nature of his mission. On hearing this the Virgin, still apprehensive, enquired: 'But how can I have a child when I have not known any man and have not been an unchaste woman?'—to which the Angel replied: 'Thus says your Lord: "It is indeed an easy matter with me"' (19, 21). For 'he creates what he wishes . . . by bidding it "be" and it becomes' (3, 47).

The manner of Mary's conception, upon which the commentators dwell at some length, is alternately described in the Koran as a 'breathing' (21, 19; 66, 12) or a 'casting forth' (4, 171) of God's Word or Spirit into the Virgin. The Angel Gabriel is stated to have been instrumental in this process; but this need not raise any difficulty, from a Christian point of view, since the Angel Gabriel is identified in the Koran with the Spirit of God or the Holy Ghost.

Mary's response to the Angel's Annunciation is reported in the *Birth of Mary* in almost identical terms. 'How can this be?' the Virgin enquires, 'For seeing, according to my vow, I have never known any man, how can I bear a child without the addition of a man's seed?'⁸ Whereupon, the Angel allayed her fears and assured her that her virginity was to be safeguarded and that she was to conceive by the

⁷ Cf. Ch. V, 2 and *Prot.* Ch. VIII, 2, which adds the charming note that the Virgin received her food from the hand of an angel.

⁸ Cf. Ch. VII, 16f. and *Prot.* Ch. IX, 12f. According to the *Birth*, the Virgin being already acquainted with the countenance of angels was neither surprised nor terrified at the sight of the Angel.

Holy Ghost 'without sin'. Hearing this, the Virgin stretched forth her hands, lifted her eyes and magnified the Lord.

When the days of her conception were accomplished (although some of the commentators recognize hardly any interval between the Annunciation and the birth of Christ), the Virgin retired, according to the Koran, into a far-off place. The pangs of childbirth overtook her under a palm-tree (19, 23). In order to enhance the beauty of the narrative, the commentators describe how the palm-tree, originally withered, was miraculously made to yield fresh dates for the Virgin to eat from and a stream of water to flow at her feet. Thus although she travailed in solitude,⁹ the Virgin was not forsaken by God, and a voice called out to her: 'Shake ye the trunk of the tree and it will yield ripe dates. Eat and drink and be joyful' (19, 25-6). When she had brought forth her baby, she carried him and went back to her people. At the sight of the child they were greatly astonished and reproached her bitterly. The Virgin did not answer but only pointed to the child, who spoke forthwith these words: 'I am the servant of God, who has given me the book and made me a prophet. . . . May peace be upon me the day I am born, the day I die and the day I rise from the dead' (19, 29-33).

A record of this miracle is found in the *Gospel of the Infancy of Christ*, one of the earliest books of the Apocrypha. Jesus is reported there to have spoken in the cradle, his first words being: 'Mary, I am Jesus, the Son of God, that Word which thou didst bring forth according to the declaration of the Angel Gabriel to thee, and my Father has sent me for the salvation of the world' (Ch. 1).

Despite this difference in the content of Christ's actual words and despite the conflicting theological implications underlying both statements, the important point is that according to these legends Christ *did* speak as a babe and herein the Apocrypha and the Koran are in agreement.

⁹ In the *Protevangelion*, the pains of childbirth overtook the Virgin, who was accompanied by Joseph, in the desert. Joseph, leaving her in a cave, went away to look for a Hebrew midwife, but when he returned the Virgin was already miraculously delivered. Cf. Ch. XII and Ch. XIV.

To sum up, then, the Koran and the Apocrypha bring out two fundamental aspects of the Virgin's character which were intended to supplement the canonical narrative. First, the holiness and piety of the Virgin from her earliest childhood and prior to her conception of the Word of God. Second, her submission and humility, subsequently to this event. The Koran does not only recognize these two aspects of Mary's character, but raises her above all the women of mankind. In a rather obscure passage, even her Assumption seems to be acknowledged. This passage reads: 'We have made the Son of Mary and his mother a sign (i.e. a divine witness or proof) and have made them to resort to a secure and elevated place flowing with water' (23, 50). Although the Muslim commentators interpret this as referring to Mary's journey into the mountain on her way to Egypt, there is every indication that this is an allusion in the oblique and metaphorical language of the Koran to the assumption of the Virgin Mary to heaven. Indeed, Christ who is mentioned here in conjunction with his mother is explicitly stated in the Koran to have been 'taken up by God' to heaven, the reality of his crucifixion being denied altogether (4, 157-8). Whence precisely did the Koran derive this important notion of the assumption of Mary, we cannot say with certainty. But the apocryphal element in it is considerable, and accordingly it is not unlikely that this notion might have crept into the Koran from some such apocryphal source. The *Transitus Mariae*, a Syriac apocryphal work, describes graphically the bodily transition of the Virgin to heaven in these words: 'And a pleasant and sweet odour went forth from the highest heaven of his glory. . . . And (the angels) carried the Blessed One to paradise with this glory, and her holy body was placed there.'¹⁰ Might it not be this or some similar source from which the Koran learnt about the assumption?

One final point must be mentioned here. In accusing the Christians of tritheism, the Koran reckons Mary as the Third Person of the Trinity (5, 111). The Holy Ghost, identified with the Angel Gabriel as we have seen, could naturally not do for this office. Hence Muhammad accuses the Chris-

¹⁰ Cf. W. Wright's English translation, London, 1865, p. 40.

tians of deifying Mary. Although there does not appear to have been a full-fledged worship of Mary as the Third Person of the Trinity, St Epiphanius mentions a heresy, 'widespread in Arabia, Thracia and Upper Scythia', that of the Collyridians, who offered sacrifices to Mary.¹¹ Some such heretical notion of the status of Mary in Christianity might have reached Muhammad. Or it might even have been a piece of malicious, heterodox propaganda disseminated by the Nestorians, as flowing logically from the official teaching of the Church, defined at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and according to which the Virgin Mary could rightly be called *Theotokos*, or Mother of God.¹² For, 'would not the Mother of God partake of his divinity?', our hypothetical heretic would argue in the manner of the Nestorians. But with this important question we cannot deal at length here, especially as the suggestion belongs to the realm of conjecture.

¹¹ Cf. *Ad. Haer.* L. 3, 79.

¹² This point suggested itself to me as the result of a discussion with Professor A. Guillaume on this question and it is consequently to him that the credit for it belongs.



SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONALITY

T. L. WESTOW

IN the course of twenty centuries the simple message of Christ has developed in many directions, like the mustard-seed of the Gospel. Dogma, moral theology, canon law, administration and organization have branched out, together, into a gigantic system which gives the impression of providing all the answers the world needs to become heaven on earth.

The only answer the system does not contain is the personal answer of each soul to its Maker. That is the soul's own and exclusive preserve. It also happens to be the only answer that really matters. St Paul made that abundantly

clear in his statement on the nature of true love (1 Cor. 13). The worth of the whole system, its vitality, its measure and stature in terms of final redemption, all this depends ultimately on the individual soul's response to Christ and his Church. Tiaras, honours, demonstrations, movements, vestments or medals will not be restored at the Last Judgment to cover our personal nakedness.

This key-truth—which is one of private responsibility, not of the Protestant private judgment—has been recognized since the beginnings of Christianity: all other factors are but meant to evoke the right response from each person: truth for vision, grace for strength, power and guidance for the liberating of love. And so saints (and occasionally sinners), pastors and learned men have set about adapting the substance of the life of Christ to the individual's need for a genuine 'spiritual life'. This is the task of what is commonly called 'spirituality', a characteristic Catholic term for a characteristic Catholic need. This does not mean that the science of spirituality is the *deus ex machina* which will provide the very decisions which each individual man or woman has to make. But it tries to provide the atmosphere, or to form the mentality and habits from which this response will come forth, if it comes at all.

Spirituality, therefore, is from a severely practical point of view of immense importance. Man's response to God is not a matter of cold reason, or of isolated actions, or of a general assent to a social, though spiritual, structure. It engages the quivering marrow of the soul; it is made at precisely that inner centre of man where thoughts become his own thoughts; where feelings, leanings, delicate hesitations, entirely and exclusively personal, due to innumerable and often unfathomable sensibilities, gradually delineate the true face of a person. It is, therefore, of all the parts of the Catholic synthesis the most subject to susceptibilities, idiosyncrasies, psychological factors. In dominant groups it is the delicate shades of one or other form of spirituality which determine the complexion of the living Church in its historical phases.

This is not always appreciated. Historically the process may be somewhat like this. One or other 'response' has,

through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the influence of contemporary history, or in some other way, risen to the level of public attention and admiration. The 'response' is scrutinized. The main lines are fixed by successive disciples. But, since man is not exclusively rational, the analysis always falls short of the reality, and in the attempt there will always be something more than an objective approach. Life pulls and stretches the original mysterious facts to adapt them to the public eye. Emotions, loyalties, sometimes a queer kind of ecclesiastical policy, habits, routine, taste, the 'spirit of the age', the need for some new fashion, a dose of religious chauvinism, and a thousand other subtle factors come into play. Not all these factors are of the pure metal as it was originally melted and purged by God. One school of spirituality corrects another. There is a difference of emphasis—and many ways of assertiveness. There is exclusiveness for the highbrow and streams of diluted propaganda for the so-called simple layfolk.

Anyone can see the danger. By over-emphasizing the system, the method, the peculiar insistence on one practice or another, gradually and unconsciously the attention shifts from the essential matter of a spiritual life to the school as such, this or that form of spirituality as such, this or that devotional practice as such. And when this process sets in, the whole psychological setting of our approach is affected, and with the best will in the world and the sincerest of examinations of conscience we are in great danger of overlooking the basic factor of all genuine spirituality which is the unique, inimitable and incommunicable personal response of the soul to God and his Church.

This response must come from *within*; it must be a response which is the true personal reaction of this or that man or woman. And it does not seem heterodox to maintain that precisely because of the uniqueness of every human person, the basic dissimilarity of each personal contribution to what we have in common in our human nature, no system, no practice, no devotion, no saint can provide the complete and adequate answer to God for any of us. We need a common source—which is Christ and the Church—and we need guidance, example and aids; but the fine edge of

the response is unique, as unique as our conscience itself. No aid can serve as a substitute, however much approved or indulged, for the burden of a uniquely personal responsibility. This can only *grow*; it cannot be bought, borrowed, stolen, or forced.

This is the very basis of that personalism which makes the Catholic Church stand out today, in a world soaked in an emotional mass-neurosis, as the bulwark for the defence of all human values as well as divine.

If, in our spirituality, we lose sight of this radical personalism the consequences are fatal. We shall be tempted to superimpose some impersonal and exterior formula or system upon an immature basis. We shall usually overlook the vast sphere which lies, in our psychological constitution, between the grossly natural and the supernatural in us. Psychological factors of whose existence in ourselves we are not even conscious will run wild and easily escape the most loyal and superficially sincere examinations of conscience. The response of the individual, however sincere, will be hampered by unaccountable conflicts, by a scrutiny of the façade but not of the inner rooms. There will be nervous tensions, breakdowns, moral lapses. Authority cannot deal with the situation. The individual cannot deal with it. There follows a wholly unnecessary deadlock, a breach, with fatal injuries on both sides. Men have abandoned the faith; communities have fallen apart; potential saints have crumpled up, and men in high places have committed disastrous sins against true love—all because of the neglect of the psychological and personal elements in their own notion of spirituality, borrowed from the outside and indiscriminately accepted.

In France, during the last two decades, some points have been brought to the fore in honest enquiries. Fr Bonduelle, O.P., and an anonymous 'Directeur de Séminaire' have examined one aspect of the conflict of 'spiritualities' in the case of the average seminarist.¹ In England we seem to have driven our susceptibilities to such a pitch that no one dares mention the real components of our leakage-problem and

¹ *La Vie Spirituelle*, October 1945, pp. 289-303; December 1945, pp. 541-555; June 1946, pp. 59-68.

superficial education. Yet, in his *Mediator Dei*, the Pope has found it necessary to devote a whole Encyclical to precisely such a conflict of spiritual schools and methods.

This short essay is but a mere effort to start the ball rolling. The argument may be sketched out as follows. Most forms of spirituality, and certainly the Church's official guidance in this matter, are based on the truth that grace is there to perfect nature, not to destroy or ignore it. This truth implies that this nature should be healthy, normal, balanced and alive. It is the wider and deeper application of the classical motto: *mens sana in corpore sano*.

If the natural foundations show cracks, the supernatural superstructure will lack balance. It is therefore sensible to order one's spiritual life in such a way that an eye is kept on the natural foundations whilst the supernatural is being built up. It is somewhat presumptuous to expect God to infuse sanctity miraculously, i.e. without our using the secondary causes created for the purpose. The principal of these secondary causes is precisely our psychological maturity and balance. This is characteristic of the saints, however 'simple' their appearance. If we paid more attention to being naturally predisposed for true redemption, there would be a better opportunity for redemption to take its full effect in us *as we are made*. We would not, on theological principles, invoke a form of justice and harsh judgment in dealing with our fellow men, which in the eyes of a decent pagan would be a flagrant travesty of common decency, let alone of Christian love.

Sanctity and sanity are words implying 'wholeness'. This is common ground. But the natural wholeness of an individual lies principally in the possession of what psychology calls an 'integral personality'. Therefore a sound spirituality is one which starts with building up a sound and decent personality. Besides concentrating on being, nature, incidental actions and habits, it would concentrate on the integral elements of the personality: true self-knowledge (metaphysical and psychological—which implies more self-humiliation than many modern spiritual authors are aware of), balance and judgment, harmony of emotion, imagination, creative vision and sound reason, and so on. A balanced

and mature person does not think himself a hero of self-sacrifice for having helped a fellow creature to share in the goods of this world: he would call it elementary decency and leave the assessment to God. He would not expect a crown for having endured someone's mannerisms: he would call it elementary courtesy. He would not brandish the label 'Catholic' over the heads of non-Catholics: he would try to attract them by an understanding and a generosity as vast as God's own and leave the result in his hands. Do our authors and hagiographers study the originality, the vitality, the independence and the supple balance of a saint's personality, and offer *these* features for imitation? If the answer is in the negative we need a change of direction. It is a change which might throw open many windows and clear the unhealthy atmosphere which vitiates so many attempts at piety, and contorts the noble features of loyalty and love. Authority without true inner personality is not a pleasant vehicle for God's spirit to be conveyed in. Submission without inner personality is hardly the stuff from which a genuine Superior can strike the necessary sparks. . . .

The early Fathers of the deserts of Nitria and Scete had this sense of personality and freedom in spirituality. 'The way of truth will aim at reaching the real and true God. But for its knowledge and accurate comprehension there is need of none other save ourselves. Neither, as God himself is above all, is the road to him afar off or outside ourselves, as Moses also taught when he said: 'The word of faith is within thy heart. Which very thing the Saviour declared and confirmed when he said: The kingdom of God is within you.'² This is Athanasius's version of Origen's lapidary words: 'The Apostle teaches that the interior man is one thing, the exterior another. The interior man is he who has more in himself to offer to God; for in him it is that the virtues dwell; in him all the understanding of knowledge; in him the renovation of the divine image. He who has recovered his appearance (*species*) in which he was moulded in the beginning by God, and who has received the beauty

² St Athanasius, *Contra Gentes*, c. 30, P. Gr. XXV, 600. For some of the texts I have used Dom Michael Marx, *Incessant Prayer in Ancient Monastic Literature*, Rome, 1946.

of his first appearance (*prioris formae*) by restoring his integrity through the virtues, can now offer his gifts to God. . . . But these things must not be sought somewhere outside man. The saving occasion (*salutis occasio*) is within us, as the Lord said: Behold, the kingdom of God is within thee. For within us lies the faculty of conversion.'³ The 'kingdom within' is the key-note of St Anthony's address to the Brethren, as related by St Athanasius.⁴

There is no mistaking this language. At a time when the notion of 'person' had not yet received the full elaboration which resulted from the christological controversies, it would be difficult to express the fundamental position of the integral personality and of intensely personal responsibility more forcefully. For the Fathers of the Desert genuine spirituality is above all a personal spirituality, and not above all a matter of conformity.

This is also borne out by the hundreds of incidents related in the *Lausiac History* and the *Sayings of the Fathers*. There is an immense freedom underneath an exacting discipline, and it is the very power of this personal freedom which keeps the purpose of self-sanctification as keen as a razor-blade. It allows of no shirking reliance on other members of the community, no diluting of the unique personal issue, the responsibility for which demands freedom of choice where the means are concerned. There is no blind, ignorant, parasitical or passive yielding to an outward structure—though it exists and is revered—as if to escape from that inner true kingdom where God is King and man's own self the steward. This is precisely what makes the greatness of these giants. You wish to live in a cell? Go and build yourself a cell. You prefer a coenobium? Betake yourself to a coenobium. You do not know which? Then, says an 'old man' laconically, try first the one and then the other. Even the rise of the Rules did not change this. Even St Benedict, who came after Pachomius, Jerome, Basil, Augustine and the mysterious Master of the *Regula Magistri*, made it plain in his rule that he did not attach a final value to his advice, and that in any case it was simply meant for begin-

³ Homily in *Numeris*, 24, 2.

⁴ Vita Antonii, P. Gr. XXVI, 20, col. 872-873.

ners, a technical term understood in monastic tradition.⁵ The Rule was not, in his eyes, what in the language of some it has become since, a final and complete structure, in every detail absolute, endowed with its almost charismatic power. . . . 'The brethren asked Abbâ Nastîr: What rule of life and conduct should a man follow? The old man said: All rules of conduct are not alike. Abraham was a lover of strangers, David was a humble man, Elijah loved silence, and God accepted the work of all of them. Whatsoever work is of God, if thy soul desireth it, that do, and God be with thee.'⁶

It is because of this basic outlook of the freedom and responsibility of the person that the virtue of *discretio*, of discernment, was of such fundamental importance to the old Fathers. Freedom lies in the perfect balance of the powers of our personality, and it is the task of *discretio* to set them free and to balance them. Thus *discretio* comes to mean: moderation, measure, human sensitiveness, divine sensitiveness, wisdom, understanding of oneself, and of others in the light of this usually humiliating self-knowledge, the careful appreciation of human and divine values, a sense of perspective, proportion, and ultimate harmony. The pattern falls into shape. And this, indeed, is but a rough sketch of some features of that *integritas* in which we were created and towards which we were redeemed.

This virtue of *discretio*, the mother of virtues, as St Benedict calls it, shows how closely the theological and psychological *integritas* are interwoven. It is in this all-round integrity that we must mature in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Church expresses this in its inimitable simplicity when it prays, as it does so often, for the support of God *quia pondus propriae actionis gravat*, because the burden of our own decisions weighs so heavily upon us. It does never pray, though, that we may run away from it or even may be delivered from it.

⁵ *Regula Monachorum*, XVIII and LXXII.

⁶ Appendix to the *Questions and Answers*, Wallis Budge, *The Paradise or Garden of the Holy Fathers*, London, 1907, I, 283, n. 605.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

R. H. J. STEUART, S.J.

THE next clause in the 'Our Father' that presents itself is 'Lead us not into temptation'. The beginning of the 'Our Father' is a prayer, not so much that his will might be done directly as that we may really and truly wish it to be done. I ask to be enlightened, that my will may be strengthened, that I may always want to do 'Your will'; I want it as perfectly as I know I shall want it in heaven.

From 'Give us this day our daily bread' onwards, we pray for protection from sin, from the danger of falling away from God. We are so liable to be drawn away by the fascination of trivialities. I ought to want even to deprive myself of perfectly innocent pleasures in this world if thereby God's Will be better done. And I want, too, to be protected from falling into sin. Why is it that we ask, 'Forgive us our trespasses'? Why is it that we make that petition? Because we are aware that since sin came into the world it has spread itself all over the world. As God saw the world he saw that it was good; it is an utterance of himself, and any man not seeing this is absolutely inexcusable. The world was good and was meant to be good, but through that thing which you would think was impossible, sin, the goodness of the world has been perverted, distorted; just as a razor or knife may be perfect, and may yet on account of its keenness be misused, so all the beauties, marvels of the world may be lethal weapons if misused. Sin is, in a way, the misuse of what is good.

St John says: 'If any man thinks he is without sin the same deceiveth himself and the truth is not in him'. The sense of sin is one of the greatest forces of sanctification. Why are we sceptical about saints who said they were sinners when they had attained a heroic degree of sanctity? Was it a pose, a mistake, that made them say: 'If only the world knew what I am *really* it would stamp me in the mud'?

The saints knew that even the highest human perfection is tainted with sin, just because we are in a world filled with sin.

What is sin? Sin is idolatry—the substitution as the object of my will of something which is not God. ‘Why did you do that?—Because it appealed to me. Did you know that doing it meant thrusting the will of God aside—at least for the time being?’ That is the main difference between mortal sin and venial sin. In mortal sin I deliberately turn aside from God altogether for the sake of the gratification of the thing I want to do. In venial sin it is not so much that I substitute something for God as that I want it with him. The average man will say: ‘I will not do anything that will make me lose God, but I do want a lot of things besides God so long as I don’t lose him’. But the saint says: ‘I don’t want anything at all besides God’. ‘What have I in heaven and besides thee what do I desire upon earth?’ Every time I sin, to the extent to which it was a deliberate sin, the whole world is the worse for it; moreover, it is a matter which has been proved over and over again, that constant giving way to sin produces a general deterioration in one’s will towards God. That is why reasonably frequent confession is such a healthy thing, because it is a sort of divine check on that deterioration.

Our Lord’s dealing with the Syrophenician woman teaches us that we are to go to him with our petitions, as a child to a father. Ask what you like, but always ask with submission to God’s Will. Let it be a childlike appeal to a Father: ‘Don’t let me do things that displease and hurt You—don’t let me get into bad ways—don’t let me be led into temptation’. The time comes in the life of a sinner when self-indulgence is so great that he cannot stop; ‘Don’t let me get like that, Father’.

This last part of the *Our Father* ought to come very close home to us. We are prone to choose sin; we are prone to choose evil; silly, nasty things even, instead of God. But I don’t want to do anything which is evil before God. I am sorry for all those things that have been done; that even in a small detail I have preferred something to God: ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall’. And I pray

(as he wants me to pray) that God in his mercy will not allow too great a strain to come upon my will, and that he will protect me from evil and the Evil One. *Ne permittas me separare a te.*

So I implore God not to put too great a strain on me: not to let me get into too difficult a situation. I know that God is merciful and loving; he won't let the situation be too much for me. That is why I say: 'Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil', or, as some translations have it, 'from the Evil One'.

However modern we are, it won't do to forget there is an Evil One. It is not as if two gods, a good and an evil, were contesting for me. No, the devil is a creature as I am, but one entirely perverted to evil, and moreover with powers of expressing himself and various activities in comparison with which ours are like the physical strength of a baby as against a boxer. What chance has a man got against a tiger?

Yet I don't want you to think of the devil as a gigantic monster prowling round, but as a personal force directed to my harm and nothing else. On the other hand, don't let us attribute omnipotence to the devil. The devil cannot read our minds; but still he is an extremely dangerous adversary, more dangerous than our own concupiscence. A subtle, entirely spiritual enemy, almost, it seems to us, unlimited in power, a force directed to my destruction. Well, now, is not that 'deliver us from evil' absolutely necessary? What can I do about it? O God, protect me from this army directed against me. From this thing that 'walketh in darkness, and the horror of the night and the arrow that flieth by day'. And the answer? 'He has given his angels charge over thee lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'

POINTS OF VIEW

IN the October (1953) issue of *THE LIFE* 'T.P.F.' brought up the subject of contemplation 'in the world' which has become a chorus in this review, repeating itself at regular intervals like the question of Rosary during Mass in the correspondence columns of the October Catholic papers. His 'Point' was taken up by far too many readers to allow us to publish them here. But at the risk of turning the subject into a hackneyed one, we may summarize or quote from some of the letters.

On one side there are those who remain convinced that 'contemplation' remains the property of the enclosed religious until after death when every Christian in grace is given the highest contemplation in Vision.

'The answer to the Martha-Mary question is in the word "balance". . . . The secular priest is called to that "state" and if he tries to be a "contemplative" he doesn't really do his secular job properly. His "balance" is, after all, almost more on the side of Martha. The parish affairs, finances, upkeep of presbytery and church: all very "Martha"!

'As to the "timetable life" of the contemplative, I feel we should, and can, adapt it to our conditions in the world; though we have got to be honest, almost brutal, with ourselves in order to do it. We know, of course, that the contemplative does not live his or her life in "sweet contemplation". There's a lot of manual work: chores, mending, etc. They reverse our life, as it were; sandwiching in the manual work between the contemplation. You will realize how we have to do the opposite. The only way they can do it—and we for that matter—is to follow the "timetable life" to my mind. And if we really want to be contemplatives it is distressing no doubt to realize that our contemplation should be carried out in the early morning and at night. Leave the day for our activity, punctuating it with the Office much as the secular priest has to do. I think I would rather quibble with "automatic efficiency" of daily duties. We have got to do just everything as well as possible if we are doing it for God; got to do it as a craft, not a machine. We would not

"throw a bed together" for the Christ Child, we would make it lovingly and carefully.

'I certainly have never heard that medieval monks did not set time aside for meditation. I do not see how they could have recited their Office '*digne, attente ac devote*' if they were contemplating—as a distinct activity—at the same time. Surely they gave a little time to meditation after their private night prayers in their cells?'

These dislocations between action and contemplation and between meditation or prayer and Office remain at the back of our minds as an inheritance from the post-Reformation world. It is the reunion of these various aspects of the Christian life that THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT has been attempting to foster. It should be said, perhaps, that the writer of the above is not a regular reader of the review. Many of the 'regulars' on the contrary show a keen desire for simplicity—the simplicity which combines varying and seemingly opposed activities or qualities in a single whole.

'Why worry whether a man is active or contemplative? A person's personal prayer (which includes contemplation) is his affair and I think the only sane teaching is that of de Caussade in his *Abandonment to Divine Providence*. His teaching on the sacrament of the present moment, i.e. doing the will of God at the present moment, which includes our duties in the world, is the best, because it brings our religion into our everyday life. Too many of us have separate times for worship (in our hearts) and our work. It is all one, but I do say that a man *does* require to go into an empty church, for instance, every day and give a minimum of half-an-hour daily to being with God alone; let us remember the old labourer in the Curé of Ars's parish who just sat gazing at the Tabernacle and when asked what he was doing there, replied: "I looks at him and he looks at me". It is no good joining societies for contemplative prayer, where one can meet others at their homes or in a hall; there would be no contemplation about that. Contemplation, surely, is a *personal* inward state, and from a natural point of view, very uncomfortable, with the terrible aridity one experiences in groping through a darkness, but we *keep on*, longing for God, and although it is a darkness to us, yet he is enlighten-

ing the soul, without us knowing. *Let us love God, or strive to, and then nothing else matters.* Every soul must find out his way to do it, *alone*, if he cannot find a good director.'

Another writer turns to the Holy Spirit as the power for unity in life:

'It seems to this writer that to lead a contemplative life in this world must not be regarded, necessarily, as a special vocation. Are we not all called to it? At any rate in some degree? It is this idea that there is no time for contemplation because we are too busy, that needs refuting. Of course our minds cannot be consciously on God if the baby is crying, the milk boiling over, and someone knocking on the door, all at the same time. But there is always an opportunity, even in the busiest domestic round, when one can consciously turn to the indwelling Holy Spirit and ask for help and grace, and offer our harassed selves to his keeping. Washing up, bed making, ironing, dusting—routine jobs such as these—provide the necessary opportunities, from the domestic scene at any rate.'

Yet another writer looks to our Lady for this simplicity:

'The truth is that the Church has the answer all the time—has had, from its beginning—and it is so obvious we do not see its significance, perhaps. For the answer to this direct consent to our Lord's invitation (which is to all) is direct contact with him—through the ordinary channels, but in such a spirit of Faith that they are, in fact, "direct"—and real. Just as the first apostles, we firmly believe, gained this help from our Lady his Mother—so can we. To anyone who, quite truly and sincerely, is set upon this course, there is a contact to be established which is quite other than that of the ordinary way of "devotion". The holy Mother (as many have discovered) will behave as "novice-mistress" to any who sincerely apply to her. This is meant "actually", not, as it were, symbolically. She can, and does, lead the soul through all the stages of its life by means of Faith, Hope and Charity. No other than quite ordinary direction is needed when this is understood, accepted, and acted upon. The devotion taught by Saint Louie-Marie gives much light on this, but unfortunately the accounts of this devotion are not always properly understood.'

And finally there is a demand for help from writers and publishers to assist those living 'in the world' with suitable literature:

'Together with this sense of vocation, there exists the urgent need for more literature and text-books to help the laity in their strivings. Could there not be more books written for the encouragement of would-be contemplatives—books that combine spiritual advice with a simple down-to-earth knowledge of the everyday rubs of life? More books like Dom Van Zeller's, also Miss H. C. Graef's *the Spiritual Life For All* and F. Pohl's *The House of the Spirit*. So much is written today to help religious, but not enough dealing with the needs *and* the hunger of the laity.'



HOLY WORK

AELRED SQUIRE, O.P.

To say that Dom Rembert Sorg's *Holy Work*¹ disappoints the hopes it arouses, is not to deny that it was an essay well worth writing. It attempts to show the relevance of the monastic tradition concerning manual labour, not only for the rejuvenation of the monastic life itself but also for the solution of the problems of Christian labour in a pagan society. Let it be said at once that its claim to present a *theological* rather than an historical justification of its approach is somewhat exaggerated. It assembles a number of reflections which have a theological bearing, but they are not built into a cumulative and cogent argument, a weakness which reveals itself clearly in the important final chapter on the laity. To those not already favourably disposed to the author's thesis, its presentation will seem uncomfortably divided between two methods, neither of which is adequately used; for it dispenses with a detailed historical treatment without compensating for it by a sufficiently judicious theoretical one. This is a pity, for we are convinced that, on both counts, a better case could certainly be made.

The early part of the book discusses chapter 48 of the Rule of St Benedict and the tradition of monastic practice which lies behind it. The author's conclusion on a debated question about the meaning of the Holy Rule is that 'putting everything together, it is indicated that agriculture was a normal *necessary* pursuit of the Benedictine community, even though individual monks were not obliged as such to do it'. Even

¹ *Holy Work*. By Dom Rembert Sorg. (Pio Decimo Press, St Louis, Missouri; \$1.50.)

those who would readily agree with this will doubtless find themselves puzzled at the fanciful suggestion that St Benedict's *necessitas loci* implies that, on the Egyptian precedent, his monks hired themselves out to neighbouring farmers in harvest time. A tendency to mild extravagances of this kind only invites hostile criticism.

On more general principles Dom Sorg has some valuable things to say. Speaking, for instance, of America—the same would be true of any industrial country—he says, the Christianization of manual labour would be a glorious apostolate, urgently indicated for our country, and one cannot help but think that Benedictine monks who overlook it are missing the day and place of their visitation. The apostolate, that is, has to recognize that the fundamental Christianization of manual labour means doing it in the Christian way. . . . Or again, 'The spirit communicated in the consecration of monks is the very spirit of the Apostles, that is, the spirit that determined the Apostles' manner of life as distinguished from the tasks of their apostolate. But it is apostolic to live by the labour of one's hands; and if a man be more than a vegetable or a cow, that life includes the worship of his God. . . . The latter becomes an exercise of his whole life and being.' In this part of the book the forthright defence of the reciprocal relation between hard work and heartfelt liturgy has probably much to be said for it. There is, it would seem, something about contact with the tools of a trade for which no amount of 'solid' spiritual reading can be an adequate substitute.

These considerations, as they relate in general to monks, are in the last chapter referred specifically to laymen 'after due allowance for the diversity of their states'. But is this difference of state properly recognized? We read, for instance: 'The positive Christianization of manual labour postulates the setting up of economically independent communities, which renounce the system that is run by the spirit of the world, whose prince is the devil'. It is therefore not surprising to find that 'the material set-up of the community . . . ideally becomes a replica of the monastic enclosure in which all the trades of manual labour, necessary for subsistence and wholesome living, find their place'. This is surely the point that most needs rethinking. Even supposing it were possible, would it really be desirable to make the world into a replica of a monastery? Is not the idea of family holiness something with its own quite different standards, involving the administration of private property with all the cares it brings with it? By all means let those who can, follow Dom Sorg's austere counsels. But how far can such solutions ever recommend themselves to any except those who already feel something of the ardour of a religious vocation and, be it added, are sufficiently free of family responsibilities to be able to take the risks involved? Is it not possible to devise a Christian theory of work and prayer which does not start from the

maxim that the situation as it exists is unredeemable? It is vitally important to retain the conviction that something is possible, lest we leave the great mass of Christian workers like men without hope. We need, indeed, something of that robust spirit of St Benedict which led him to build the house of God on the very site where the pagan temples had formerly stood.



REVIEWS

THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By H. F. D. Sparks. (S.C.M. Press; 13s. 6d.)

The idea of this very well-arranged book is to show, with the fullest documentation from the text of the New Testament itself, how in the first place each of the books came to be written, and then how they came to be placed in the series which became the 'Church's Book', the New Testament.

The first instances of the way in which the Christian message was given to the world after the Resurrection are to be found in the earliest sermons of Peter, as recorded in Acts, from Pentecost onwards. The first chapter analyses this message and sees it firmly anchored to the Messianic hope of the Old Testament. It was in this light that Christianity was first presented.

It is most frequently assumed that the first time the message was committed to writing was after the field had widened to include the Gentile world, and St Paul was writing to the Thessalonians. The next two chapters therefore deal with St Paul, and take his Epistles in chronological order, providing full arguments for their dating. The conclusions are orthodox (the Pastorals are genuine) and arguments against the Epistles are often discussed. The tradition, however, that Hebrews is by St Paul is 'certainly wrong' (p. 81).

With regard to the Gospels, which are taken next, the situation is less satisfactory. Since 1951 it is not easy to write about the composition of the Gospels, unless one has read Abbot Christopher Butler's book *The Originality of St Matthew*, for whether one accepts the proofs or not, the arguments of that book cannot now be ignored, and all one's readers who have read it will inevitably subject one's conclusions to its penetrating criticism. And since February 1953 the same thesis is presented more simply in the *Catholic Commentary*, where the arguments of Dom Bernard Orchard about the dependence of Thessalonians on St Matthew, hitherto only available in *Biblica* of 1938, are also made public. Professor Sparks, after discoursing aptly on the oral tradition at the beginning, is unfortunately still committed to the priority of St Mark, and the supposition that St Matthew was an expansion of St Mark made between A.D. 70

and 100. This notion is, as so often, taken as so axiomatic that 'expansion rather than the reverse' becomes a principle, and is applied for instance to the problem of 2 Peter and Jude (p. 134). The same axiom about the unoriginality of St Matthew, of course, also compels him to conjure up the old ghost Q which Abbot Butler so convincingly laid (p. 111); and St Luke thus gets the date A.D. 80-90, which for some years was fashionable. And this leads in the next chapter to difficulties about the dating of Acts, which the author would like to place in A.D. 63—the obvious suggestion from the text—but unfortunately cannot allow himself to do because of the dates of the Gospels. Nevertheless, allowing for the axiom of Marcan priority, it must be said that these chapters are exceedingly well argued. It is remarkable in fact how many difficulties are reduced if the traditional originality of St Matthew is once more accepted.

The traditional authorship of St John's Gospel is asserted, while the alternative theories are discussed (pp. 118-20), but with regard to the Apocalypse, although 'the attribution to the son of Zebedee has much to commend it', the author feels it cannot be sustained (p. 142), and the materials of the argument are, as in the other sections, most lucidly supplied.

The last chapter deals with the growth of the canon and the idea of a canon in the Church up to the end of the fourth century when it became fixed. In general, therefore, this is a most useful book. There is a mass of evidence in its short compass, highly compressed but extremely clear, and if we take leave to hesitate about the theories which colour the study of the Synoptic Gospels and cognate problems, we find much valuable information about the origins of the various books.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS. By Ronald A. Knox. Vol. I: The Gospels. (Burns Oates; 18s.)

Just as Mgr Knox's Version has qualities which make it quite different from other versions, so is this Commentary different. It is written, Monsignore tells us in the preface, for those who 'want to read the Bible for themselves without shirking the difficulties'. And there are difficulties, even in the Gospels, apparent contradictions, obscure sayings, parallel passages, variant readings. It is this kind of thing that Monsignore is attempting to elucidate. He is not going to discuss 'intricate problems of scholarship and of historical criticism'. For these things we can go to the more massive standard commentaries, as well as for questions such as 'How large was the Lake of Galilee?'—an example given in the preface of a question he is not going to answer, although in fact he does so, albeit *en passant*, on page 220 (on John 6, 15-25).

Yet this is indeed a work of scholarship. As in his work of translation,

Monsignore is always asking himself, What do these exact words *mean*? What did they mean to the original audience? And then, in view of the rest of the Gospels, and of the immediate context, what do they imply? Thus every sentence is examined in the background of the whole Gospel narrative, and connected with other passages parallel or relevant.

The text of the Knox Version is taken for granted, though Monsignore often explains why sometimes he would prefer to use the Greek text. Thus there is much less preoccupation with vindicating a rendering than was provided in the *Notes on the Sunday Epistles and Gospels*, published first in *The Tablet* and then as a book in 1946, so soon after the appearance of the translation. Sometimes the commentary is an elaboration of a note printed in the Knox New Testament: occasionally it shows a development to a new conclusion, as for instance on the 'third hour' in Mark 15, 25, where the note gives the usual explanation that it indicates the period 9 a.m. to midday, while the Commentary makes the striking suggestion that it means 'three hours had now elapsed' (since they started). The Notes on the Epistles and Gospels had ultimately the same approach, yet it is remarkable how different the Commentary is, dealing with the same passage. The earlier book deals with a fragment, is still vindicating a translation, and is ephemeral in manner, sometimes almost flippant. The present book deals essentially with the whole Gospel, is frequently much less erudite (about Greek words, or citation of opinions), always more staid in its diction.

In the course of this Commentary, and its introduction, there are very many valuable ideas and interesting conclusions, often original, always rewarding, regularly presented with that charming tentativeness that has become characteristic. A handful which particularly interested one reader might be indicated here.

Regarding the Synoptic Gospels (pp. ix-x), after mention of Abbot Christopher Butler's book (which Monsignore elsewhere called a 'land-mark'), the suggestion is made that Luke's irregular dependence on Matthew could be most easily explained by his use of a document ('Q, if we like to call it so') *based on Matthew*, not, as in the old view, the basis of Matthew, but a collection of our Lord's sayings taken from Matthew. This suggestion is a real, new contribution.

In the notes on Matthew 2, 13, and Luke 2, 39, Monsignore faces the problem of order of events at the time of the Flight into Egypt and the Presentation, and advances the theory (so rarely held, but which has always appealed to the present writer) that the Flight may have been only a matter of a few days and have taken place between the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem and the Presentation. This would suppose that Christ was born only a very short time before the death of Herod in B.C. 4.

In the study of the parables, Monsignore would see a more frequent

reference to the Jew and Gentile question: for instance, in the 'Treasure and the Pearl' (Matthew 13, 44) he sees the faith of the Gentiles, and he approaches the Prodigal Son (Luke 15, 11) and the Unjust Steward (Luke 16, 1) with the same theme in mind. This undoubtedly throws new light on many parables.

The problem of the census in Luke 2, 2, is studied at some length, and Monsignore suggests that Luke was trying to say something like this: 'We all know that there was a census under Quirinius in A.D. 6; I am not talking of that, I am talking of an earlier census'—whether or not Quirinius had two terms of office.

And so we could go on. But Monsignore is like the rich man in Matthew 13, 52 (Knox), 'who knows how to bring both new and old things out of his treasure house'.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

PERFECTION DU CHEF. By Dom Claude Martin; edited by Dom R. J. Hesbert. (Editions Alsatia, Paris.)

While many know something of the life and character of Marie de l'Incarnation (called by Bossuet the St Theresa of France), her son, who became the Maurist Dom Claude Martin, is a much less familiar figure. Yet it is largely to him that we owe the Maurist edition of St Augustine, and few who make use of it know that Dom Martin was twice elected assistant to the Superior-General, and that during his second term of office the very highest responsibilities of his Congregation fell to his charge.

The publication of these conferences by Dom Hesbert from a MS. of the Bibliothèque Nationale is welcome as revealing the spirit of the Maurists during the second half of the seventeenth century. Although one might expect from the title a treatise on the Mystical Body, the subject is the Being and Attributes of God, described in conferences written specially for 'Prelates, Pastors and Superiors, and all who have charge of souls', for use when they make their own private retreats.

Each of the thirty Meditations has three points, and then it is resumed in an *abrégé* likewise of three points. God's Attributes are considered as the models for Superiors, and are treated in a way that is correct, sound—and entirely uninspiring. One seeks in vain the influence of St Augustine's doctrine and personality, and one wonders why the author is so lacking in the humour and vivacity which were such attractive characteristics of his mother.

The long introduction describes the Maurists' way of life, and emphasizes the fact that they were, above all, monks and men of prayer, who led fervent and mortified lives, while their works of erudition were a by-product of a tiny and highly organized minority, in the artificially created

community of St Germain-des-Prés. This centralized organization was not for the glory of the Congregation, but for the good of souls, both of the reader's and the writers'. Even the most erudite monks were not excused from the common tasks of sweeping and laundry work, which were an integral part of their monastic life. Like the primitive Carthusians, the Maurists did not exclude a silent apostolate from their lives—'being unable to do so by our mouths, we preach the word of God with our hands' (*Consuetudines* of Guigo, ch. 28).

But it seems regrettable to us that the spirituality of the Counter-Reformation was allowed to invade their cloisters and apparently carry all before it. There can be no reasonable doubt of the holiness of Dom Martin, but it seems of a very different kind from that of the great monastic saints of the 'Benedictine centuries'.

HUGH FARMER, O.S.B.

SAINTS AND OURSELVES. Edited by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter; 10s. 6d.)

This book is a very good example of the present rather popular practice of getting distinguished men and women to write about distinguished men and women: the latter 'distinguished' rather than 'famous' because, while St Thérèse of Lisieux, as Mr J. B. Morton styles her, is pretty well known, the Venerable Mary of the Incarnation is not. There are obvious disadvantages in this method; some may feel that the author needs to be scraped acquaintance with as well as the saint, and that by the time we are getting to know something about the saint and the writer's particular attitude the story comes to a close and we have to start all over again. All the same, it is undoubtedly a common human reaction to wonder, now what has Robert Speaight got to say about St Augustine? or Antonia White about St Thomas Aquinas? We like to know other people's views. And of course these views are interesting, as we would expect when we consider the twelve Catholics, noted personalities in their own widely differing fields, who have contributed these studies. A happy result of this variety of authors is that we are presented also with a various company of saints. Praise or preference of one study above another depends largely on the individual reader: I myself was interested especially in what E. B. Strauss had to say about that most un-English saint, Maria Goretti, and grateful to Harman Grisewood in making for me a real person out of 'Greg. Turon'. And that perhaps is the outstanding virtue of this book: not so much that it sets out to make the saints real people, as that the writers never imagine they were anything else. It is a style of hagiography we are becoming more accustomed to, but it is not yet so common as to be a commonplace. It is certainly a pleasure.

RACHEL ATTWATER

NOTICES

THE PASSION of our Lord has from time to time been analysed from a scientific angle, and though such an analysis runs a risk of missing the sacramental character of the act of redemption by concentrating on the literal, material fact, it obviously has its part to play in the total picture of what happened on Calvary. Dr Pierre Barbet, the eminent French surgeon, contributes the latest scientific knowledge to this analysis in *THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST* (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.). He is able to bring out the intensity of our Lord's physical sufferings in a way that is peculiar to the doctor of medicine; and from his descriptions we are able to learn much of the horror of the Stations of the Cross. But perhaps his most interesting and constructive chapters deal with the archaeology of the Crucifixion and of the Holy Shroud.

FR GEORGE BICHLMAIR, S.J., in his *The Man Jesus* (Mercier; 10s. 6d.) has also submitted the person of our Lord to a special analysis, this time with a view to revealing his masculinity, as opposed to the feminine traits which he feels have been too often emphasized in the popular picture of Christ. Again we have to remember that such a study concentrates only on a part of the whole sacrament of the Incarnation. On its own it would give a false view, but as a precise study of one aspect of Christ's character and work it has its value. The author makes some very wise remarks about the true Christian attitude to sex; but he tends to overstep the mark in drawing such a sharp distinction between Christ as a man and not a woman.

THE PASSION has been treated too from the Scientific Scripture scholar's point of view, and this time in the form of seven Lenten Conferences, by Mgr John M. T. Barton in *THE PHASES OF THE SACRED PASSION* (Sands; 2s. 6d.). In this he is most successful, supplying details not about the physical torments but about the day-to-day happenings as described in the New Testament. There are hints and suggestions in the texts of the Gospels which only the Scripture scholar can detect. So we turn with confidence to Mgr Barton's elaboration of the story of the Passion. He fills in the picture of the passion and death of Christ in a manner that is far more helpful and constructive than the analytical method of the specialized physicist or psychologist.

THE EASTER VIGIL has been presented in French and Latin and commented on by Charles Becker in a very handsome and well-bound volume (*La Nuit Pascale*, Desclée de Brouwer; 54fr. b.). A neat volume like this would be invaluable in English, too.

EXTRACTS

A RUSSIAN CARMEL is being founded in France as the contemplative centre for the conversion of Russia. One of the sisters engaged in making the foundation has written:

Now we have permission from all the necessary authorities—our own wonderfully kind and big-minded and apostolic superiors of the Order, and also of Cardinal Tisserant who gives us ‘toute latitude pour envisager toute solution’—to found a bi-ritual Carmel. Even the most zealous Byzantine adherents say that vocations to a Carmel of that rite alone would be more than rare (until we can go into Russia—and even then, who knows, many Russian converts prefer the Latin rite) so the two ‘rites’ will help each other, and as we can say all the Divine Office as usual, until the Byzantines are numerous enough to say theirs on their own, we can and *may* have the little foundation this year—our Lady’s special year. She has done everything all the time. . . . The Russian sister is here. . . . But we have no house yet and no money—but possibilities.

WE EXTEND a welcome to yet another Carmelite periodical—this time a learned quarterly edited from ‘The Institute for Carmelite Studies’ in Rome. Its character is mainly historical, its language comprises in its first issue English, Italian, French, German and Latin, and its name is CARMELUS, and for two hundred well-filled pages per issue the charge is the equivalent of \$3.00 per annum; and it may be obtained from Fr E. M. Lynch, Whitefriars, Faversham, Kent. The first number contains a detailed investigation of the visions and ecstasies of S. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, another long study on the mystical writing of John of St Samson, a history of the Carmelite contribution to the discussion on the certainty of being in a state of grace, and there are also Carmelite texts edited with precision.

Dr Pochin Mould writes of ‘the Celtic Church and our Lady’ in *Doctrine and Life* (April-May). The ancient hermit monks were outstanding in their devotion to the Mother of God well before the ninth century:

The Celi Dei (monks of Tallaght) were asked why they were so continually singing the Magnificat. The answer, with a rather Irish twist to it, was that it was fitting that the song which had come from the head of the Virgin Mary when she was conceived of the Holy Ghost, should be set as a crown on the chant in praise of God. . . . St Moling (died 697), one of the favourite patron saints of the later Celi Dei . . . once escaped from his enemies by singing an Irish litany of the saints, beginning with St Brigit and ending with our Lady.